



Columbus County
Economic Development Commission

11-4-2011

Chairman Julius Genachowski
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street SW
Washington, D.C. 20554

Re: WT Docket No. 11-65

Dear Chairman Genachowski:

People here in rural Columbus County, NC, still carry fond memories of Bill Clinton's 2000 visit to Whiteville to promote the importance of broadband communications in thinly populated areas. President Clinton warned then about the danger of rural areas being left on the wrong side of the "digital divide." As the FCC is well aware, that danger is still alive, despite the progress of the last decade.

Practically speaking, the proposed merger between AT&T and T-Mobile represents the best insurance for counties like ours to guarantee we won't be left without mobile broadband service or with broadband too slow and outdated to take advantage of high-speed Internet applications. The high-performance mobile broadband technology that this merger would bring to Columbus and other rural counties would mean that we would no longer have to take a backseat to other cities when it comes to broadband accessibility.

This improvement would greatly expand our potential to diversify our rural economy by attracting new businesses and jobs to our area, and the merger itself would generate thousands of new jobs across the country, both directly and indirectly.

For reasons of improved technology and an economic boost, I urge you and the FCC Commissioners to give this merger the approval it deserves. The people of Columbus County look forward to the broadband benefits it would bring.

Sincerely,

Gary Lanier, Director
Columbus County Economic Development Commission

cc: Commissioner Michael Copps
Commissioner Robert McDowell
Commissioner Mignon Clyburn